

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 001599

SIPDIS

WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
DEPT FOR DS/IP/WHA
DS/DSS/ITA
DSERCC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/25/2014

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [HA](#) [MINUSTAH](#)

SUBJECT: MINUSTAH AND HNP RAID BEL AIR; GANGS RETALIATE;
POLICE STATION ATTACKED IN THE NORTH

REF: A. PAP 1522

[B](#). PAP 1562

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission, Douglas M. Griffiths, for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In response to the May 31 attack on a downtown public market (ref A) and subsequent threats by gangs to commit similar acts throughout Port-au-Prince, the Haitian National Police (HNP) and MINUSTAH conducted a joint operation in Bel Air June 4 that reportedly resulted in 7 deaths and 34 arrests. Other criminal violence over the June 3-5 weekend produced further casualties, although the exact number and circumstances remain uncertain. Kidnappings continue unabated, including four cases on June 6 involving victims related to mission locally employed staff. Separately, a police station and a former elections office in Le Borgne were attacked June 2 by an alleged paramilitary group operating in the north of Haiti. End summary.

HNP-MINUSTAH raid in Bel Air

[1](#)2. (C) HNP Director General Leon Charles told the DCM on June 6 that the gangs suspected to be responsible for the "Tet Boeuf" market fire on May 31 were threatening to burn other marketplaces. The group, "Armee Sans Tete," reportedly led by "General Toutou" and based in Bel Air, began as a kidnapping ring but had allegedly turned more violent. The HNP and CIVPOL met on June 3 and agreed on a joint operation for June [1](#)4. According to Charles, the HNP, backed by CIVPOL and MINUSTAH military, moved in to Bel Air at roughly 0400 and began a house-to-house search in the target area. When residents began shooting at police, the HNP requested covering fire from a Jordanian FPU to allow HNP SWAT forces to enter the remaining homes. The Bel Air raid resulted in 2 deaths and 34 arrests, according to Charles. (Note: the UN does not have independent figures for the number of deaths. End note).

[1](#)3. (C) The early morning raid reportedly stirred anger amongst Bel Air gangs who then spent the morning on a vengeful search for police. Around mid-day, Charles said, gangs reportedly tried to attack the family home of a Crowd Control Unit (CIMO) officer. The home was unoccupied, but gangs allegedly set fire to 3 houses and 3 cars in the area. The HNP responded to the scene where a significant amount of gunfire was exchanged between police and gang members, resulting in the deaths of five people.

Other weekend violence

[1](#)4. (C) Other violence throughout the city on June 4 no doubt contributed to the number of casualties. Sources told us that well-armed bandits attacked businesses in the Delmas 2 district on June 4, including M&S Construction and a Comcel (mobile phone) building at the intersection of Rue Nazon and Rue Logand (ref B). Sources at both Comcel and M&S construction told emboffs that their guards exchanged significant fire with the gangs. The bandits told M&S security guards that they merely wanted to transit the M&S property in order to attack the rear of the police station that abuts M&S's property. In addition, there were two reports of unsuccessful attacks on the port. On the evening of June 3, four boats with four-to-five armed men in each boat, approached the port from the water. Port guards and Haitian Coast Guard rebuffed the attack, but the gunmen threatened that they would return on Monday, June 6. On the evening of June 4, embassy officers received reports of an attack on the port's main gate. We contacted Minustah authorities, who responded with an APC. Minustah's quick response to this incident underscored their tepid response to the exchanges of gunfire reported above.

Tallying up the Deaths

[1](#)5. (C) While some press reports suggest police killed as

many as 25 people and burned several homes themselves, Charles declared that the General Hospital Ambulance recovered a total of 7 bodies from the two incursions to Bel Air, and denied reports that the police had burned any buildings. According to the human rights organizations RNDDH (formerly NCHR), the central morgue director reported receiving a total of 25 bodies from June 3-6: 4 on June 3; 16 on June 4 (not all deaths from gunshot wounds); 2 on June 5 and 2 on June 6, including one police officer. (Note: Charles explained that an HNP officer was shot the morning of June 6 as he escorted his child to school near Nazon. End note). Ten of the bodies received on June 4 reportedly came from the area around the Comcel office, not Bel Air. MINUSTAH suggests that lower Delmas is the site of a continuing war for territory by gangs associated with Dred Wilme are attempting to replace local gang leaders with their allies.

Kidnappings continue unabated

16. (C) Although many kidnappings are not reported to police or MINUSTAH, unofficial reports to the Embassy of kidnappings continue to rise. On June 6, the American Citizen Services Section of the Embassy reported that four Embassy employees had been affected by kidnappings on the morning of June 6: the son of a GSO employee (released the same day); the daughter of a GSO contract driver; the brother of a USAID employee, and the daughter of another USAID employee. In addition, on June 5, a woman was reportedly kidnapped near the Caribbean Market on Delmas 75. (Note: The Caribbean is frequented by Embassy personnel. End note).

Attack in LeBorgne

17. (C) MINUSTAH reports that on June 2, roughly 10 armed men from the so-called "Armee Dessalines de Liberation Nationale" (ADLN) raided an HNP post and a city electoral registration center in Le Borgne, on the northern coast between Cap Haitien and Port-de-Paix. The group captured the 4 HNP officers manning the post and destroyed part of the interior of the station before moving to a former communal elections office (BEC), where they threw a molotov cocktail and shot at the front of the building. No casualties were reported. OAS registration chief Elizabeth Spehar told us June 7 that this attack did not hit any currently operating election facilities.

Comment

18. (C) Much of the violence (and most of the deaths) over the weekend appears related to continued efforts by Cite Soleil gangs to expand their area of influence in Port-au-Prince. These battles are increasingly violent, with some business leaders there now relying on more heavily armed security personnel to protect their interests. The MINUSTAH-HNP operation seems to have successfully netted several important gang leaders, but the HNP feels increasingly hunted by gangs who are angry at their losses and vow vengeance against the entire HNP.

19. (C) The Le Borgne attack highlights a lesser-known aspect of the troubled security situation here, namely the presence in certain parts of Haiti's north of shadowy armed groups with mixed political and criminal motives. Their reach is by no means widespread, but they represent another potential threat to the electoral process. Septel will provide more details.

FOLEY